

United States Senate

December 15, 2020

1002

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write today to thank you and your fellow commissioners for your efforts to support innovative technologies in the critical effort to close the digital divide and offer broadband internet access to all Americans. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), under your leadership, has made great progress in freeing up spectrum for commercial use and encouraging the private sector to achieve technological advancements in a competitive environment, and I applaud your accomplishments. Your leadership has been especially important as American telecommunications companies work to deploy a nationwide fifth-generation wireless network (5G), something which, in addition to ensuring the United States remains a global leader in telecommunications, will play a significant role in closing the digital divide. I have long stressed the need for the United States to win the race to 5G, and the pillars of your 5G FAST Plan are helping make that a reality.

As you know, the Commission's 2018 authorization of multiple non-geostationary satellite orbit (NGSO) systems to utilize frequencies in the 12 GHz band recognized the unique allocation to fixed satellite systems on a co-primary basis – protecting them from interference and maintaining the careful balance of spectrum sharing in this band. The Commission's authorization of these next-generation, low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellations for the purpose of providing domestic broadband services jump-started billions of dollars of investment by private satellite providers. Many leaders in the LEO space have deployed satellites in anticipation of providing space-based broadband in the coming years, a critical advancement toward connecting Americans with each other – a challenge made much more apparent during the pandemic.

In light of these significant investments, and in recognizing the unquestionable progress made by the private sector in providing broadband services in historically

underserved areas, it is my hope that you will continue to ensure America's competitive edge in the deployment of LEO broadband systems is protected, and in that endeavor, ensure this spectrum, on all needed bands, is fully utilized to the benefit of the American public and our national interest. Closing the digital divide requires an all-the-above approach that carefully balances a number of often competing interests. The FCC, under your leadership, has done this exceptionally well, and I am confident that will be the case on this matter as well.

Thank you again for your outstanding leadership throughout your chairmanship. Please let me know if you have any questions and I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator